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A jab to the jaw is not all bad

By Ann Wigley

A jab in the jaw was a blow to misery, and a new beginning for many Cuna Indians on the San Blas Islands. Carter Dobbs, a Calhoun City, Miss., dentist, and his able assistant, wife Marjorie, delighted in the opportunity to relieve pain by punching and pulling on all oncomers during their first volunteer missionary service.

Dobbs, upon returning from the four-week mission among the Cunas, in 1967, related his experiences to his home church, First Baptist, Calhoun City. Soon, he and Marjorie were responding to speaking invitations from churches and clubs all over the state.

While growing up in Calhoun City, next door to this writer, Carter never showed signs of wanting to punch on anyone. He was the meekest kid in the neighborhood. Now, however, he will pierce your jaw, pull bone from your mouth, and charge you for doing it — that is, unless you live in the poverty-stricken areas of the world.

"Taking the step to enter into the volunteer contributed dental missionary service was not easy," said Carter. In 1965, God began speaking to him about giving of himself on a short-term basis doing dental mission work overseas.

"With our surrender came a peace and joy that we'd never experienced before," said Carter.

When D. L. Wood, a retired missionary from Panama, spoke to their church he told of a struggling, Baptist missionary hospital on the Island of Ailigandi, San Blas. It was a dire need of everything, including dental volunteers.

Carter wrote to Dan Gruver, missionary surgeon and head of the

hospital, and the only American doctor among the 300 San Blas Islands.

After many weeks of anticipation, Carter finally received a note of two words, "Come on." Shocked and disappointed, they encountered Satan poised for a knockout blow to the ego. They had expected a warm reply with details — how to proceed; inoculations necessary; what dental supplies and instruments to bring; climate and clothing; food and lodging; culture and language of the people; travel plans, and other "pertinent" information. Realizing that God was in charge, they used common sense and packed every useful item they could lug.

When they arrived on Ailigandi and discovered the unimaginable primitive conditions and the shortage of water, linens, electricity, medical supplies — everything — they praised God for having pushed the weight limit on the plane.

Gruver stated later that he read their letter and threw it into the wastebasket as being "just another letter from a far-out-crank" similar to ones constantly received. He didn't know why, but he dug it out and scrawled, "Come on." Carter said, "Dan Gruver was so crisis — oriented from moment to moment, and the demands on his time so great, it was remarkable that we received a 'Come on.'"

The San Blas Islands lie on the Atlantic side of Panama and are inhabited by 30,000 Cuna Indians living as did their ancestors of centuries past, and resisting change. Carter said they place their greatest faith in witch doctors whom they venerate,

although over half the populace suffers from tuberculosis, dysentery, and other parasitic diseases, in addition to those found only in the tropics.

The absence of roads — only jungle and mountain trails — has always impelled the Cunas to use their dugouts (cayucos) in the choppy sea for island-hopping.

Carter described the Cunas, smallest in stature of any people in the world, except the African pygmies, as hard-working and industrious. Each family has its own small plot of land on which to raise corn and peppers.

The women, in brightly colored, hand-made blouses (molos), head scarfs, and gold rings in their noses, work at raising children — often 20-30 —, caring for the house, making molos, and paddling up-river twice daily where they bathe the children and themselves, and do the laundry.

"Home" is one of hundreds, constructed jointly in rows, of pole and cane with thatched roofs. The common division walls of cane separate neighbors. Privacy is unheard of, and the children wear no clothes.

Carter said, "You have to see it to believe it." Although he is still blinking, it is for tears of compassion for a people who'd never heard the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ until this century. The only church on Ailigandi was Southern Baptist.

The then one-year-old hospital was the only one in all of the San Blas Islands.

Carter said that after being shown the tiny upstairs room in the hospital they were to call home, he received his first shock, but not the last — no

privacy. There was one shower for the whole staff and able patients; one commode, flushed with a bucket of salt water from a near-by tub; and an ever-waiting line-up. Marjorie mastered the technique of brushing her teeth, taking a bath, and shampooing her hair with one Army helmet of precious rain water caught in barrels from the hospital gutters.

Gruver had a dental chair and engine waiting for the Dobbses. Dental hygiene was unheard of, so pulling 200-600 teeth per week was not surprising.

Vivid details of that first missionary journey influenced nurses, carpenters, plumbers, technicians, engineers, physicians and others from all over Mississippi to volunteer their services and money for God's mission work throughout the world.

The Dobbses made four more trips to Ailigandi, not only to punch out pain, but to gather all necessary information for getting water from the mainland, two miles across the open stretch of bay, to the island. Crossing the shipping lane with its currents and irregular, coral bottom posed a problem, but Aubry Edmonson, a retired U.S. civil engineer, backed by the Calhoun County Baptist Association, conquered the no-water problem on Ailigandi.

So full of joy and peace were the Dobbses that they have since volunteered for Brazil, Mexico, Honduras, and Paraguay to alleviate misery with more punching and pulling. There's no way that a jab to the jaw is all bad; just ask Carter and Marjorie Dobbs.

Ann Wigley lives in Clarksdale.

Soviet TV crew visits U.S. church

EDINA, Minn. (EP) — It was an unlikely scene — a leading Soviet network journalist sitting in the front row of an evangelical church in Minnesota, listening intently to the service. Her camera crew roamed the aisles taping the service — worshipping, singing, and even praying — for later viewing in the Soviet Union.

Leading Soviet journalist Svetlana Staradomskaya recently spent two weeks in the St. Paul/Minneapolis area filming scenes of American life to use in her Soviet news broadcasts, which have an estimated national audience of 20 million people.

Pastor John Eagen presented the Russian journalist with an American Bible. Inscribed in the Bible was the wish that she would "come to know the wonderful freedom of Christ's love and the tremendous peace that results from an intimate relationship with Him."

In brief remarks to the congregation, Staradomskaya said "It is a privilege for me to just be here with you and tell you that now I think this is what lives in our hearts and our souls; that Soviet people really want to make as many bridges with you as possible, to get more close ties in every sphere of life — economic, political — and perhaps one day will come when we get together in such a solemn place as your church to pray together for our cooperation, our love, our understanding."

First Church "shares love with Corinth"

Leading into the Christmas season, members of First Church, Corinth, have been sharing love with their community. A month-long program has emphasized giving appreciation to many agencies and individuals.

"Sharing Love with Corinth" included the presentation of cakes in the shape of a patrol car to the sheriff's and police departments. Trays of home-baked cookies were delivered to more than 550 employees of Magnolia Hospital, and pots of chili were served to city firemen.

Coinciding with American Education Week, church members delivered candy and baskets containing an original "blessing" to teachers in area schools. Earlier, cards from church members and candy jars were given office personnel in the county courthouse, city hall, the post office, and the library. Visits were made to nurs-

ing homes to share refreshments with residents and staff.

Other church members brought the Boys' Club, YMCA workers and children's shelter cookies had hosted a coffee for the Corinth Welfare Association board. A plant given to the American Red Cross secretary was another deed expressing love. Special prayer times were scheduled during the month.

Task force chairmen for the various activities were Martha Furtick, hospitals; Lena Gregory, prayer; Elaine Dudley, Boys' Club, YMCA, children's shelter, welfare board, and Red Cross; Mary Green, publicity; Ginny Cameron, government offices; Yvonne Gallaher, fire, police and sheriff's departments; Alicia Wilbanks, nursing homes; and Melinda Bennett, schools. Dennis H. Smith is church pastor.



"Sharing Love with Corinth," a month-long focus of First Church, Corinth, brought a gift of appreciation to faculty members of East Corinth Elementary School. Principal Myra Caruth, right, receives a candy-covered strawberry. From left

are Katherine Potts, Harriet Butler, Nelia Foster, and Becky Martin. Butler and Foster, teachers, and Carruth are also First Church members.

Editorials . . . by Don McGregor

Don't go away

We have been watching the development of the Southern Baptist Alliance for many months. It began with the idea of being a haven for those who felt that their denominational home had been taken away from them. It was to be simply a fellowship group. That is understandable.

Over the months, however, the concept has shifted.

The Southern Baptist Alliance has, indeed, become a denomination within the denomination. The Alliance now has elected an executive director. It is giving thought to ways of manipulating Cooperative Program funds. Its members are working on ways to be involved in seminary training in cooperation with several non-Southern Baptist seminaries. And it has plans under way to publish Sunday School literature in the publication, *SBC Today*.

There is nothing wrong with these plans. Southern Baptists have never been tied to the use of Southern Baptist literature or the support of Southern Baptist institutions. And the Cooperative Program has always been just that, voluntary cooperation in missions endeavors.

Laying those plans, however, does nothing to cause a move toward unity in Southern Baptist thought and endeavor.

It is sad. For the most part, members of the Southern Baptist Alliance have been as strong in support of Southern Baptist endeavors as anyone could be. Their frustration is understandable. But such actions do nothing to bring the convention back to where they had helped to take it. These movements can only cause a wider split in a denomination already fractured at midpoint.

There are some who are saying that the Alliance members along the East Coast want to pull out of the Southern Baptist Convention and form their own denomination. The Mississippi Alliance, however, does not want to work it that way. Those members want to stay with Southern Baptists and try to bring things back to where they are more to their liking.

Surely that is the better approach. Southern Baptists have become a very big organization. Perhaps bigness is to be desired, but it must be admitted that with bigness comes an inevitable diversity.

And surely there must be some parameters which define Southern Baptists. Our purpose, however, is not to achieve complete conformity but to spread the gospel. That is why the Southern Baptist Convention was organized, and that is the overriding statement of purpose in the

constitution.

We must decide if we are going to insist on the convention's being able to decide who can participate in the missions work or if we can allow new members to come in who say, "I believe as you do, and I want to help." In other words, will we choose our new members; or will we allow them to choose us. And if they choose us, will we say to some, "Sorry, you don't fit."

These are hard questions. Hopefully, members of the Southern Baptist Alliance will stay and help us answer them.

Until recently the national president of the Southern Baptist Alliance was a Mississippi Baptist pastor, John Thomason of Northminster, Jackson. Thomason has resigned both his church and the SBA presidency and returned to the seminary.

Thomason told the *Baptist Record* that he had no interest in dividing the denomination.

The Mississippi state president for the organization has the same feeling. He is Charles Myers, who retired as pastor of Alta Woods Church, Jackson. He told the *Baptist Record* that he is not interested in the SBA becoming anything more than an avenue of fellowship for those who feel they have been disfranchised. He said he is not interested in a new



denomination, new Sunday School lessons, or a new seminary.

The new executive director of the Southern Baptist Alliance, Stan Hastey, is one of Southern Baptists' finest. He is the son of missionaries to Mexico and has served on the staff of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs for many years. We wish him well; and, certainly, with the attacks on the Baptist Joint Commit-

tee that have been experienced in recent months, the new situation must have been attractive.

But there is sadness in that conditions are such that it would hold attractiveness.

There may be those who don't feel it to be so, but Southern Baptists need those 40,000 or so members of the Southern Baptist Alliance. We hope they won't go away.

Guest opinion . . .

Prayerful accomplishment

By Rodrick Conerly

Quite often people say to us, "I'm going to be praying for you over there on the mission field." Now, of all people, I know people pray for us regularly. Our parents and relatives intercede for us frequently. Other friends also pray for us often. As a pastor of 12 years and a missionary now for seven, I am well acquainted with the many times we are prayed for as God's messengers. But I never really knew just how effective the joint prayers of a large group of people all praying at one time could be until those prayers protected my family last October.

We had nothing short of a week of miracles during the third week of October past. At first it seemed to be just one of those unfortunate things that happen when you are on the mission field. The first thing that happened that week naturally occurred on Monday. The belt on the washing machine broke. That doesn't seem too awful, until you realize the Sears repair shop is some 5,000 miles away. You can't buy a washing machine replacement belt here. We were faced with the prospect of buying a whole washing machine to replace one broken belt. Then we remembered the mother of Ronnie Fox, a fellow missionary here in Lima, was to leave the states the next day on her way to visit her new granddaughter born here in Lima. We called Ronnie's wife, Gwen, to see if

we could get a call in to the states to see if the new belt could be bought. Well, Gwen's mom and Ronnie's mom both live in Atlanta, Ga. While Ronnie's mom was packing to leave, Gwen's mom went out and bought the new belt. The belt arrived on Tuesday, and I had the machine working again on Wednesday. That was miracle number one.

All in all, that doesn't seem like a big deal of answered prayer. But wait. I am not finished yet.

Miracle number two for us that week occurred in the United States in McComb, Mississippi. A lady was picking up cans and bottles beside the road to resale for extra money for her family. In her search she found an envelop with my name on it. It was from the Foreign Mission Board to me and was nothing less than my pay check for that month. We have our check sent to our bank in Magnolia, Miss., some 10 or 15 miles south of McComb. Anyway, the lady thought it looked important enough to take to a pastor of a local church. She went to see the pastor of South McComb Baptist Church, Rev. David Milligan, who is a friend of mine. It turns out my uncle attends that church. He knew that my mother-in-law has signature rights on my checking account, and he suggested she be called. My mother-in-law went to the church, got the check, and deposited it in my ac-

count a day before any checks bounced. That was miracle number two.

Coincidence? I don't think so. You see there was a third miracle that week. Miracle number three happened here in Lima. Our son, Gary, has his Peruvian drivers license and I let him use the car to go out on the weekends. As he was taking some friends home that Friday night, a drunk driver pulled out in front of him. Gary could not stop and they had a bad wreck. Thank the Lord, our son and his friends came through the wreck without a scratch. The car was damaged so much that it was decided not to fix it but to sell it rather than put that much money into an old car. The frame was bent on the car and the repairs to fix it totaled more than \$5,000. For all practical purposes, the car was totaled. The car was totaled, but no one was hurt. Luck? I don't think so.

The week following that week of miracles we received a letter from the First Baptist Church of Amite, La., with a stack of prayer cards with our names on them dated from the week before. Their prayers definitely saved our son from injury and harm. As for the other two miracles? Who ever said a miracle had to be something big and tremendous? Too often we allow God's care to go unnoticed when it seems too small to be a miracle.

How many have been the times we

have been cared for and protected by prayers for us? How many terrorist bombs have we heard and seen explode without the slightest notion of possible harm? How many nights have we heard gunfire outside our homes and thought nothing of it as we drifted off to sleep again? How many tremors of earthquakes have we heard and felt and thought nothing of it as it passed? How many have been the times that we have been protected and not even known of it? We cannot number them. We do not know.

Too often we are unable to say thank you for your prayers. We are far away and often do not personally know you as you pray for us. On behalf of my

fellow missionaries, please let me say thank you to all of you who pray for us. We thank all of you for all your prayers over the years. We are very grateful for your prayerful protection.

James 5:16

The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

Colossians 4:2

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ.

Rodrick and Caroline Conerly, are Mississippians who are missionaries to Lima, Peru.

Hymns Baptist sing . . .

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

By William J. Reynolds

A young minister from Philadelphia visited the land then known as Palestine in 1865. On the day before Christmas, Phillips Brooks rode horseback the several miles from Jerusalem to Bethlehem.

From the streets of Bethlehem he went out to the nearby fields, the traditional site where the birth of Jesus was announced to the

shepherds. He returned to Bethlehem and attended the Christmas Eve service in the ancient basilica built over the traditional site of Jesus' birth.

Phillips Brooks was on a one year's study leave from his Philadelphia pulpit. A couple of years after he had visited Bethlehem, he wrote the stanzas beginning "O Little Town of

(Continued on page 4)

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Home Board appoints two

ATLANTA — Mississippi natives Jimmy and Linda Furr were among 16 people appointed to mission service by the Home Mission Board, SBC, in November.

Furr was appointed interfaith witness regional director for the Nashville, Tenn., area. Mrs. Furr was appointed as a family and church worker.

Since 1984, Furr has served as

pastor of Harrison Street Church, LaVista, Neb. A native of Tunica, he has served churches throughout Mississippi. He is a graduate of New Orleans Seminary.

Mrs. Furr has been an interfaith witness associate in Mississippi and Nebraska since 1982. She is a native of Sledge. The Furs have two children.



Jimmy and Linda Furr

The Second Front Page

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300 or close it

MBCB asks enrollment goal for Clarke College by '89

By Tim Nicholas

Members of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board meeting in Jackson last week heard Earl Kelly's retirement plans, discussed the 1989 Cooperative Program budget, and voted a recommendation concerning enrollment goals at Clarke College.

Kelly, executive director-treasurer of the MBCB for the past 15 years, reported that he plans to retire on Aug. 15, 1989, as noted in last week's Baptist Record. He said he expects the Executive Committee, which will serve as search committee, to have his successor in place by July 1 and that Kelly will take vacation the first two weeks in August. He will be doing volunteer work with the Baptist World Alliance's world aid committee in Zagreb, Yugoslavia. (See separate story in this issue concerning the search committee.)

The budget discussion included a recommendation by Kelly to approve what the convention passed, including the \$200,000 line item for Mississippi College to spend on Clarke College.

"The convention is the final word,"

said Kelly, "they told us to do it and we've got to do it. If we do not meet this expanded budget, everything down the line except the Expanded Annuity receives a cut — the Foreign Mission Board, Home Mission Board, seminaries, the other three colleges receive a cut, the orphanage, this organization... we're putting the burden on every piece of work the convention stands for." He added, "The priority of this convention is 111 students (at Clarke College)."

A handful of board members voted not to approve the amended budget which now stands at \$20,103,541.

Board members passed with little opposition a motion from Larry Otis which read that the board acknowledges "that enrollment at Clarke College is the major constraint, and that the Mississippi Baptist Convention in annual session has approved an additional funding for the 1989 budget, that if Clarke College reaches 300 FTE (full time equivalent) students by September, 1989, it will be self-sustaining and not

need future special line item budgeting support.

"If, however, Clarke College fails to reach 300 FTE students by September, 1989, that this Board recommends to the Mississippi College Board of Trustees to close Clarke College and dispose of all property according to Mississippi Baptist Convention procedures."

The motion survived a motion to table by Leland Hogan, 24-43, and was subject to two amendments. The first amendment was to change the word "direct" to "recommend" to the MC trustees. That amendment passed.

The second amendment by David Sellers would have given Clarke three years to get enrollment up to 300 FTE. That amendment failed.

Ben Carlisle made a motion that the board go on record opposing line item budgeting from the floor of the convention. Lannie Wilbourn made a substitute motion that people wanting to make budget recommendations do so before the convention meets. Both motions failed.

Search committee begins work to replace Kelly, asks input

The Executive Committee of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board has begun its work of searching out a nominee for presentation to the Convention to follow Earl Kelly, the executive director-treasurer who will retire on Aug. 15, 1989, according to Eugene Dobbs, pastor of First Church, Philadelphia, and chairman of the Executive Committee.

Dobbs pointed out that the committee will welcome input from every interested Mississippi Baptist. Sugges-

tions should be written, he said, and could be sent to any member of the Executive Committee. "Every written suggestion will be reviewed," he noted.

Dobbs' address is P. O. Box 299, Philadelphia, Miss. 39350. His telephone number is 656-1507.

Other members of the Executive Committee are Robert Calvert, P. O. Box 35, Ashland, Miss. 38603; Charles Nestor, Box 533, Bruce, Miss. 38915;

Ed Holmes, 6028 Lake Vista Circle, Gulfport, Miss. 39507; Martin Hayden, Rt. 1, Box 553, Fulton, Miss. 38843; Ingram Foster, P. O. Box 520, Prentiss, Miss. 39474; David Sellers, P. O. Box 5, Collinsville, Miss. 39325; Larry Otis, 645 Jefferson St., Tupelo, Miss. 38801; Keith Gordon, Rt. 2, Box 94, Columbia, Miss. 39429; P. J. Scott, 9491 Stuart Ave., Olive Branch, Miss. 38654; Bill Duncan, 401 W. Church St., Booneville, Miss. 38829; Lannie Wilbourn, 103 Bright Hill Place, Brandon, Miss. 39042; W. W. Walley, 606 South Street, Waynesboro, Miss. 39367; Bartis Harper, P. O. Box 464, Tylertown, Miss. 39667; Rex Yancey, P. O. Drawer P, Quitman, Miss. 39355; and Donald O'Quin, 104 E. Cypress, Charleston, Miss. 38921. Serving ex officio is Jim Futral, president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. His address is 787 E. Northside, Jackson, Miss. 39206.

(Continued on page 4)

YOUTH EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

DECEMBER 29-30, 1988

Theme: "CELEBRATE JESUS"

Thursday Afternoon, December 29

2:00 Opening Celebration — David Crain
2:15 Welcome To Mississippi College — Mrs. Jennifer Trussel, Director of Admissions
2:20 "Celebrate Jesus" — Guy Henderson
2:25 Fun With Al Fike
2:40 Celebreat — Dennis Ray Smith
3:00 Worship Celebration — David Crain
3:15 Message — Ken Alford
4:00 Dismiss

Thursday Evening, December 29

6:30 Group Celebration — David Crain
6:45 Fun Again With Al Fike
7:30 Celebshake — Dennis Ray Smith
7:50 Message — Kelly Green
8:30 Prayer Celebration — Dennis Ray Smith.

Friday Morning, December 30

8:45 Group Celebration — David Crain
9:05 Special Music — Bethlehem Baptist Church, Laurel — Danny Holifield, Director
9:15 Message — Kelly Green
10:00 Celebrate Break
10:20 Celebrate Jesus Testimony —
10:30 Proof That God Has A Sense Of Humor — Al Fike
1:00 Break For Lunch.

Friday Afternoon, December 30

1:30 Group Celebration — David Crain
1:35 Special Music — First Baptist Church, Jackson
Cindy Townsend, Director.
1:50 Testimony In Song — David Crain
2:30 Recognitions
2:45 Message — Kelly Green
3:30 Depart For Home

The registration fee is \$3 per person, which covers the syllabus. You may register at the door or pre-register by sending names and registration fees by December 15 to the Evangelism Department, MBCB, P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205.

Baptists pledge \$30,000 to Armenian quake relief

NASHVILLE (BP) — Baptists have offered \$30,000 to help victims of the Dec. 7 earthquake in Soviet Armenia.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has offered \$20,000 for medicine, warm clothing, and housing. The Baptist World Alliance, through its Baptist World Aid program, has made \$10,000 available, to be channeled through the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, a member of the BWA.

A larger amount for hunger-related needs will be made available from Southern Baptist world hunger funds if Soviet Baptists indicate such help is needed, said Keith Parker, director of Southern Baptist work in Europe.

Foreign Mission Board officials expect to receive further details Dec. 13, after Nodari Kvirikashvili, the superintendent of Baptist work in Soviet Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, arrives in Moscow. They are looking for the most expedient way to deliver the aid to the earthquake vic-

tims, Parker said.

Baptist World Alliance General Secretary Denton Lotz and President Noel Vose sent a telegram to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, expressing sympathy on behalf of the BWA, for the loss of life. The BWA leaders assured Gorbachev, "Our Baptist people are prepared to help in any way possible."

Another BWA telegram notified All-Union Council leaders of the availability of the \$10,000 in aid. The telegram said: "The Baptist World Alliance joins you in sorrow over the tragic loss of life in Armenia. Please be assured of our prayers and concerns."

The Foreign Mission Board's Parker said Soviet Baptists have issued an urgent plea for prayer support during the crisis. Addresses for relief funds are Baptist World Aid, 6733 Curran St., McLean, Va. 22101; and Foreign Mission Board, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, Va. 23230.

Labor dispute settled at Korea Baptist hospital

By Marty Croll

PUSAN, South Korea (BP) — Union and management negotiators have settled a labor dispute that threatened the future of a well-known Baptist hospital in South Korea, but financial problems loom as a major hurdle to overcome, missionaries said.

Dan Jones, a Southern Baptist mis-

sionary physician from Laurel, Miss., stepped in as interim administrator at Wallace Memorial Baptist Hospital in Pusan last summer after labor union elements forced out the hospital's two top administrators.

The hospital named a new ad-
(Continued on page 4)

Drought leads to "sprinkling"

DANNEBROG, Neb. (EP) — Russell Hoy, columnist for the Ohio Farmer, won the National Liar's Hall of Fame annual Pinocchio Award with a lie that said the 1988 drought was so bad that "the Baptists were sprinkling and the Presbyterians were using a damp cloth" for baptism. He added, "The Lutherans were passing out rain checks and at least one Catholic priest was working at turning wine back into water."

SBA allocates first budget, offers 'models' for giving

By Marv Knox

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (BP) — The Southern Baptist Alliance approved a \$626,590 budget, proposed six "models" for mission support and elected Stan Hastey as its first executive director during an SBA board meeting here Nov. 28-29.

The SBA is a two-year-old organization of 40,000 Southern Baptist moderates. They have vowed to remain in the Southern Baptist Convention but have charged current SBC leadership with rejecting principles and causes they hold dear.

The 1989 SBA budget includes the \$95,100 Global Ministry Fund; \$250,000 for theological education; and \$281,490 for operating expenses.

The Global Ministry Fund includes 10 components: the Southeastern Seminary chapter of the American Association of University Professors, \$5,000; Southern Baptist Women in Ministry, \$7,200;

Habitat for Humanity, \$5,000; the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, \$10,000; and two mission churches in Georgia and Kentucky, \$21,900.

Also a missionary counseling service based in Winston-Salem, N.C., \$2,000; Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, \$6,000; an adult Sunday School literature supplement published in SBC Today newspaper, \$18,000; and an SBA ministry to "those who have been fired, dismissed, or otherwise lost their jobs due to the (SBC) controversy," \$20,000.

The board defeated a proposal to build a home/support station for missionaries Joyce and Fred Wall in Haiti. Opponents to the project cited three major objections: First, the Walls did not meet SBC Foreign Mission Board criteria and were not appointed by the board, and SBA members expressed a desire to support FMB-approved but unfunded projects. Second, Wall had sought curriculum from fundamentalist leader Jerry Falwell's Liberty University to train local pastors. And third, members expressed concern about appearing to start their own foreign mission board by going outside the SBC structure in foreign mission work.

The missions committee also declined to recommend two other proposals:

First was a community organization in Charlotte that provides humanitarian service but is not Christian-centered. Second was a request for pastoral aid for an English-speaking congregation in Tokyo whose financial support from the Foreign Mission Board is being cut.

In a matter related to the mission actions, the SBA voted to empower members Alan Neely of Princeton, N.J., and Anne Neil of Wake Forest, N.C., to meet with Foreign Mission

Board leaders to discover mission projects the SBA could fund and to discuss missions philosophy, such as cutting aid to English-language pastors and requiring 70 percent of SBC foreign missionaries to spend most of their time on evangelism and starting churches.

The SBA also approved guidelines for funding mission projects. Priority will be given to projects that reflect the SBA covenant and that "could not be adequately carried out without our help." Project sponsors must be charitable, educational, or religious organizations and meet appropriate tax codes; show financial accountability; provide the SBA with a copy of their governing documents; and reciprocate with "hands-on" ministry. They also will be "encouraged, where appropriate, to seek funding through the SBC or SBC agencies."

The SBA theological education committee expressed the need for a new ministerial training program in the Southeast, since Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., members said, now is controlled by the conservative wing of the SBC.

The budget's \$250,000 allocated for theological education will help finance a divinity school in Richmond, Va., jointly supported by the SBA; four American Baptist seminaries — Andover-Newton, Colgate-Rochester, Eastern and Virginia Union; and Union Theological Seminary, a Presbyterian school in Richmond.

SBA officials are meeting with leaders from the five schools to work out an arrangement for strengthening Virginia Union, a predominantly black school in Richmond, to take in Southern Baptist ministerial students. As outlined, the three other American Baptist schools would provide two professors per year to Virginia Union on a rotating basis, and the SBA would finance support for three more professors, probably from the Southeastern Seminary faculty.

Union Theological would offer its consortium relationship with Virginia Union, through which students can take courses at both schools; use its library, dormitory and apartment space, and dining hall.

The SBA's first-year cost is expected to be about \$200,000. Board members approved a proposal to spend about \$49,000 in designated funds to hire a development specialist to raise money for the project.

Four other theological education possibilities appeared on the agenda. The board encouraged Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem in its consideration of a divinity school that eventually could enroll about 250 students. It urged continued contact between Duke Divinity School in

Durham, N.C., and the SBA to foster ministry training through a director of Baptist studies at the school; pledged "to keep in touch" with Averett College in Danville, Va., as it considers a ministerial program; and heard about property for a school near Charlotte.

Undesignated receipts, excluding membership fees, given to the SBA will be split three ways. The operating budget will receive 50 percent; the Global Ministry Fund will get 45 percent; and 5 percent will go to theological education.

The SBA's models for mission support are described in a document titled "Supporting the Cooperative Program," which was ratified by the SBA board.

The Cooperative Program is the SBC's unified missions and ministries budget.

SBA members and other moderates have criticized the budget, citing "taxation without representation" because people with their theological/political views no longer are appointed to boards.

During an SBA "listening session" in September, members proposed various funding devices, most of which called on churches to channel their SBC contributions through the SBA, so the SBA could designate funds to organizations it favors and away from those it does not favor.

But the SBA models for giving place the responsibility for designation on the churches. The models are: maintaining current commitment, with 100 percent of a church's mission gifts going to the Cooperative Program without restrictions; designating all Cooperative Program contributions to stay in the church's own state convention; escrowing Cooperative Program funds, using the interest to support mission causes identified by the church; fully supporting state convention causes but designating the portion that goes to the SBC; splitting contributions between state, SBC, and SBA causes; and contributing completely to the SBA and its Global Ministry Fund.

New Executive Director Hastey, 44, is chief of the Washington bureau of Baptist Press and is associate executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, where he has worked for 15 years.

The SBA office will relocate from Charlotte to Washington when Hastey's tenure begins Jan. 1. However, the SBA placement service will continue to function out of Charlotte.

In other action, the SBA set its next meeting dates for Feb. 28 and March 1, to coincide with the annual SBA convocation in Greenville, S.C., March 1-3.

Marv Knox writes for BP.

Search Committee

(Continued from page 3)

The policy manual of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board states in Section V, General Administration, paragraph A, Executive Director-Treasurer: "The Executive Committee acting as a committee of the whole shall have the responsibility of nominating to the Convention Board for election a person to fill the office of executive director-treasurer when a vacancy occurs."

His published sermons, which are so greatly admired, are found in theological libraries, but this simple Christmas hymn written for children may be found in hymnals throughout the world. For this he is best known.

William J. Reynolds is Professor of Church Music at Southwestern Seminary.

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

(Continued from page 2)

Bethlehem" for the children of his Sunday School for a Christmas program. His vivid memory of the visit is reflected in the lines of the hymn.

Several years later Brooks moved to Boston where he became the distinguished minister of Trinity Church and was recognized as one of America's outstanding preachers.



Bolivar history off the press

Jack Gunn, director of the Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission, left, hands the first copy the "History of Bolivar Baptist Association of Mississippi" to Bolivar Director of Missions Odis Henderson. Moderator Gary Johnson of Skene looks on. The 136-page paperback offers a comprehensive history of Baptist work in the county along with photos and stories of all the Southern Baptist churches there. Committee members working with Gunn on the book were Miss Frances Hood, Sammy Cranford, Mrs. Lucille Boykin, Mrs. O.C. Cockerham, Mrs. Louise Skelton, Mrs. Mary Ann Odum, Mrs. Louise Hester, and Peter Haik. J.S. White contributed to the photography. This presentation was made during the 65th annual meeting of the association. Former Director of Missions Charles Everitt was the featured speaker for the closing service. Harry Howarth was elected new moderator.

Youths invited to watch Carey, MC fight it out

HATTIESBURG — Baptist youth groups can enjoy two top basketball games between in-state rivals William Carey College and Mississippi College at a minimal cost.

Athletic Director/Coach Steve Knight of Carey has announced that Saturday, Dec. 17, will be Baptist Youth Night on the Hattiesburg campus. Members of organized Baptist

youth groups will be admitted to both games for only 50 cents per person.

The Lady 'Saders will host the Lady Choctaws at 5:30 p.m. The Crusaders will host the MC men at 7:30 p.m. in Clinton Gymnasium at Carey.

Groups interested in taking advantage of this offer should contact the Carey Athletic Department at (601) 582-6111.

Labor dispute settled at Korea Baptist hospital

(Continued from page 3)

ministrator in September. He is Kim Sung Chin, a specialist in lung disease who left his job as medical director during the height of the labor dispute, at the same time hospital administrator Lee Koung Soo resigned.

Kim's attempts to listen to the concerns of employees and work with union members have led to a closer relationship between management and the union, Jones said. Other factors that helped calm the situation included the union's alarm at watching a nearby Catholic hospital close in a similar dispute and public pressure on union officials to quell disturbances leading up to the Olympic Games in Seoul.

"The hospital is back to normal, day-to-day operations," Jones said. "For all the people who prayed, I want to express deep appreciation. The acute crisis is much better."

Jones added, however, that Wallace Hospital still must overcome newly

identified financial problems.

Management is trying to deal with the rising salaries characteristic of South Korea's burgeoning economy. Higher labor costs, plus the labor strife that caused the hospital's patient count to drop drastically, have hurt.

"The strike brought financial problems to a head," Jones said. "What we need is a long period of stability."

Founded by Southern Baptist missionaries, the hospital is one of the best-known medical facilities in the southern part of the country. It treats more than 200,000 patients each year and employs a staff of nearly 600. It is named for Bill Wallace, a Southern Baptist missionary to China who died in 1951 in a communist prison.

Marty Croll writes for the Foreign Mission Board.

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Correction

The list of new trustees for William Carey College in the Dec. 1 issue of the Baptist Record was erroneous. The new trustees are Randy Davis, Bob Self, David Grant, Dumas Smith, John Green, and Robert Woodall.

Council calls for strategy on bivocational ministry

By Jim Newton

JACKSON, Miss. (BP) — The Council for Bivocational Ministries has called for a national strategy of utilizing bivocational ministers in the Southern Baptist Convention.

About 50 council members also voted during their sixth annual meeting to continue to use the term "bivocational minister" to describe people who hold dual jobs in secular employment and as Baptist ministers.

Glen Ailshie, a bivocational minister from Mullins, S.C., who also is executive vice president of a national food processing company, was re-elected president of the council, which is composed of about 90 Baptists involved in a support system for bivocational ministry.

John Saunders, director of the Florida Baptist cooperative ministries department, proposed that the council develop a national strategy. Such a strategy should include ways for SBC agencies, state conventions, associations, and local churches to utilize bivocational

ministers more effectively, he said.

Dale Holloway, national consultant on bivocational ministries for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, suggested the council appoint a 10-member committee to develop a proposed national strategy for presentation at next year's meeting.

The strategy committee will be chaired by Ailshie, pastor of Christian Faith Baptist Church in Mullins, as president of the national council. Other members will include Vice President Ken Cook of Jackson, Miss., three members of the council's board of directors and the chairmen of five committees appointed earlier. Holloway will provide staff support for the strategy development committee.

Currently, 9,162 bivocational pastors serve Southern Baptist churches, according to a report presented to the council by Ray Dalton, associate director of the Home Mission Board's program research department.

Jim Newton writes for the Home Mission Board.



It is estimated that more than 500 Mississippi Baptist ministers are bivocational, that is, they hold secular jobs alongside church related vocations. Officers of the Mississippi Baptist Bivocational Fellowship are Ken Cook, pastor of Line Creek, Scott County, and corporate communications officer for MP&L, secretary-treasurer; Bobby Turner, pastor of Schlatter Church, Leflore County, and vocational education high school teacher at the Cleveland Vocational Complex, vice president; and Tommy Tackett, pastor of Valley Grove Church, Pontotoc Association, and a statistician with the Mississippi Statistical Service, president.

Awards go to bivocational pastors in three states

JACKSON, Miss. (BP) — Pastors of churches in three states were honored as exemplary bivocational ministers during the Southern Baptist National Council of Bivocational Ministries.

The awards were presented by Dale Holloway, national consultant for bivocational ministries with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, honoring bivocational ministers in open-country, urban and new mission congregations.

William M. Suttles, pastor for 38 years at Haralson Baptist Church in a rural area southwest of Atlanta, was honored as for his work in a town-and-country situation. Suttles is acting president and provost of Georgia State University in Atlanta. He has been a country bivocational preacher for more than 50 years.

Claud Slate, pastor of Rivercrest Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, for 28 years, received a plaque as exemplary bivocational pastor in a metropolitan area. Slate, who supplements his income through direct sales, marketing and insurance com-

missions, was recognized for his leadership role in establishing and leading bivocational ministers' fellowships in Tarrant Baptist Association and the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Ken Brown, pastor of Lifeline Baptist Mission in Florence, Miss., was honored for leading his congregation to baptize 22 new Christian believers last year, with 20 other new converts awaiting baptism at the time the annual report was prepared. A former auto body shop owner in Amarillo, Texas, Brown helped start the mission four years ago. To support his family, he does automotive upholstery work, restores antique cars, vinyl and convertible tops.

The three pastors honored during the conference were success models other bivocational ministers could admire, respect and emulate, Holloway said. "We're not saying these are the very best bivocational ministers in the SBC, but we are holding them up as exemplary models for others," he said.



Glen Ailshie, left, a bi-vocational pastor from Mullins, S.C., was elected president of the National Council for Bivocational Ministries during the council's meeting in Jackson. Ken Cook, second from left, a bi-vocational minister from Jackson, was elected vice-president. Three directors were elected. They were Carl Barrington of Southwestern Seminary, center; Don Beall of Eastern South Dakota Association, second from right; and Vernon Cole, Kentucky Baptist Convention. About 50 council members attended the meeting.

Indiana cuts seven from staff

INDIANAPOLIS (BP) — Seven staff members were laid off, another was offered a transfer until retirement and \$235,000 was cut from the 1989 budget as the executive board of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana struggled to match income to outgo.

The executive board met a week after the annual meeting of SCBI, which had heard reports of financial problems, both in the current year and in the year to come. Despite predictions of a \$200,000-plus shortfall, messengers adopted a 1989 budget of \$2,600,441.

The adopted budget projects \$1,841,197, will be contributed by the congregations affiliated with the Indiana Convention, a figure newly elected Executive Director-Treasurer Mark Coppenger thinks is too high. He said a more realistic figure for receipts would be about \$1.6 million.

"For the last 10 years the convention has budgeted on the budget rather than on the receipts. There has been a 24 percent increase in the budget, but the total receipts have risen only 18 percent," he said.

He explained the convention will end the 1988 budget year "about \$90,000 in the red" and that occurred



Jane Newell, left, and her daughter, Laura, sing for the National Council for Bivocational Ministries during the council's meeting in Jackson. Mrs. Newell is secretary in the Mississippi Baptist Foundation and a member of First Church, Florence.

with four major staff vacancies. The executive director and state missions director resigned in March of 1987 in a dispute over use of designated funds; the editor and director of Christian ministries — who were "co-advisors" in administering the state staff — subsequently resigned.



Three bi-vocational pastors were honored for exemplary service during the meeting in Jackson of the National Council for Bivocational Ministries. At left are Ken Brown and Mrs. Brown of Florence, Miss. Brown, pastor of Lifeline Mission in Florence, was honored for leading his congregation to baptize 22 last year with 20 others awaiting baptism when the annual report was prepared. Next are William Suttles and Mrs. Suttles, Suttles is acting president of Georgia State University and pastor of Haralson Church southwest of Atlanta. Claud Slate is pastor of Rivercrest Church, Fort Worth. At right is Dale Holloway, pastor of Day Star Church in Rankin County and national consultant for bi-vocation ministries with the Home Mission Board.

Bethlehem cancels Christmas celebrations

BETHLEHEM, Israel (EP) — For the second year in a row, Israeli government officials have canceled traditional Christmas celebrations in Bethlehem, the city of the birth of Jesus, which lies inside the Israeli-

occupied West Bank and has been the site of violence since last December, when the Palestinian people began openly revolting against Israel's presence in the area.

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Priesthood doctrine attracts most attention

By Marv Knox

NASHVILLE (BP) — Baptists' doctrine of the priesthood of the believer topped the list of concerns — aside from mandatory officer elections and budget approvals — expressed at Southern Baptist state conventions this year.

Thirty-seven of the 38 conventions of fellowships had reported on their meetings through Baptist Press, the denomination's news agency, by Thanksgiving.

A dozen conventions adopted resolutions on the priesthood of the believer. Race relations and gambling were the next-most-discussed issues, with seven resolutions each. Top 10 resolutions also included abortion, six; the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the Cooperative Program unified budget and alcohol/drugs, four; and pornography, "The Last Temptation of Christ" and the Baptist Faith and Message Statement, three.

Resolutions are not binding upon Southern Baptists, but they reflect the prevailing belief of messengers present and voting at an annual meeting.

The spate of resolutions on the priesthood of the believer was prompted by a resolution on the doctrine approved during the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting this summer. The SBC resolution noted the doctrine "has been used to justify wrongly the attitude that a Christian may believe whatever he so chooses and still be considered a loyal Southern Baptist" and that it "can be used to justify the undermining of pastoral authority in the local church."

In the following months, some Southern Baptists claimed the SBC resolution undermined the long-standing benefits of the doctrine and over-emphasized the authority of pastors.

All 12 state resolutions affirmed the doctrine, including Mississippi, although most did not mention the SBC resolution. Missouri's expressed regret for "any unintentional offense or affront to our lay members" caused

ed by the SBC resolution. Virginia's noted no person or creed stands between an individual believer and God. Louisiana messengers defeated an amendment that would have made their resolution conform to the SBC's.

The resolutions on race relations also had an antecedent in an SBC event. During the SBC Christian Life Commission's September meeting, commissioner Curtis W. Caine Sr. of Jackson, Miss., called the late Martin Luther King Jr. a fraud and said apartheid in South Africa "doesn't exist anymore and was beneficial when it did."

Resolution reaffirms God is "no respecter of persons."

Tennessee's resolution named Caine and said messengers disassociate themselves from his remarks and reaffirm their commitment to the biblical teaching that God "is no respecter of persons." Mississippi's said Baptists in the state "desire to make it known that we in no way endorse these positions espoused by the trustee from Mississippi" on the CLC. Maryland/Delaware's called on the CLC to repudiate "the repressive system of institutionalized racism called apartheid." New York's urged the SBC calendar committee to set Race Relations Sunday on the date nearest King's birthday.

Actual threats of legalized gambling initiated the resolutions on that subject. Alabama, Georgia, and Texas opposed lotteries. South Carolina spoke against gambling in general, as did Louisiana, which also decried off-track betting. Ohio spoke against casinos, and Tennessee opposed parimutuel horserace betting.

Arkansas' resolution on abortion reaffirmed the sanctity of "both born and pre-born" human life, which it

said begins at conception, and it stated abhorrence for public money to finance abortions. Colorado, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina also passed anti-abortion resolutions. Alabama expressed concern that a prominent attorney affiliated with the 1973 Roe v. Wade Supreme Court case spoke at Samford University's Cumberland School of Law.

South Carolina took the strongest stand in support of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the Washington-based religious liberty organization that has been criticized by SBC conservatives and received a budget reduction from the SBC this year. South Carolinians voted to budget funds in 1990 to support the BJCPA but did not set an amount. Kentuckians referred to committee a motion to budget \$2,500 for the BJCPA. Resolutions in Maryland/Delaware, Missouri, and Tennessee expressed support for the agency.

Arizona and Louisiana decried the use/abuse of drugs. Colorado opposed the use and sale of alcoholic beverages and the legalization of illicit drugs. South Carolina spoke against the use of alcohol.

Louisiana, Michigan, New York, and Texas all supported the Cooperative Program — Southern Baptist's unified budget that supports missions, evangelism, church starting and educational endeavors around the world — and/or praised their churches for support of the budget. Louisiana's resolution called for commitment to the program as a "manifestation of our denominational unity and vision for the future under the lordship of Christ."

Three conventions addressed the Baptist Faith and Message, the SBC's 1963 doctrinal statement. Hawaii affirmed the document. Oklahoma affirmed its preamble, which emphasizes the soul's competency before God, as part of its priesthood of the believer resolution. Maryland/Delaware turned back a recommendation to add the statement to its con-

stitution and bylaws.

Colorado, Florida, Mississippi, and Georgia passed resolutions opposing pornography.

Alaska and Colorado expressed outrage at the movie "The Last Temptation of Christ." And in a related move, Louisiana addressed the media's representation of Christianity.

Aside from resolutions, several states took actions unique to them:

— Virginians responded to the SBC "denominational crisis." They asked messengers to next year's SBC annual meeting to: continue to fund the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs; permit churches to "negatively designate" their Cooperative Program contributions; support theological education that is serious, open, balanced, and responsible; accept the state's elected nominees for the SBC Committee on Committees; and develop "a new style of relating" so that "genuine healing may take place."

"Conservatives won in Georgia."

— North Carolinians reduced the powers of their president. As opposed to appointing members to the convention's committees on enrollment and committees, the president and two vice presidents now comprise a committee to nominate members to the two committees, and those nominations go before the convention's general board, which can ratify or substitute the nominations before presenting them to the convention for election.

— Colorado eliminated five staff positions — the state Woman's Missionary Union director, a religious education leader and three support staffers — in an effort to save \$70,000 annually. The WMU voted to become an auxiliary of the convention and

raise its own support.

— Alabama, a predominantly white convention, met with four predominantly black Baptist conventions for a joint worship session.

— California changed its name, from the Southern Baptist General Convention of California to the California Southern Baptist Convention.

— Kansas/Nebraska evacuated to the basement while tornadoes skipped about and later heard two sermons by flashlight.

— Northern Plains dissolved its 21-year-old convention and divided into the Montana Southern Baptist Fellowship and the Dakota Southern Baptist Fellowship.

— Tennessee approved a residential care ministry for developmentally disabled adults.

Several states took measures to finance the new expanded annuity plan for retired ministers. At least five conventions, including Mississippi, wrote the cost into their budgets as a "preferred item," which is to be paid off the top of undesignated receipts. Four others incorporated the cost into their budgets but cut the percentage they will send to fund SBC causes.

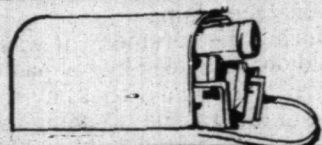
Of 35 states that reported new budgets, 18 voted to increase the percentage they send to the SBC, including Mississippi, 13 held the same, and four decreased the percentage.

Three conventions — the District of Columbia, Hawaii, and Virginia — elected women as presidents. Five promoted vice presidents to the presidency, and 12 re-elected incumbents.

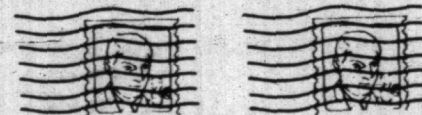
Only in Georgia did an incumbent lose re-election. And only four conventions reported presidential contests where aspirants were affiliated in some form with elements of the SBC theological/political controversy.

Conservatives won in Georgia, and moderates won in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

Marv Knox writes for BP.



Letters to the editor



Letters to the editor must be limited to 300 words and the editor reserves the right to trim those that are longer. Editorial prerogatives must be reserved under all circumstances, and the opinions of the letter writers do not necessarily reflect the views of the staff of the Baptist Record. Only signed letters will be used, but the writer may request that his name be withheld. The withholding of names will be at the discretion of the editor.

Breaking the law

Editor:

Reference your editorial titled "Breaking the Law. You say that to break a law under any circumstance is wrong. I must assume that your judgment of wrong is a moral judgment.

If your line of thinking be correct, then Jesus Christ would be indicted as an anarchist, for he found no problem in breaking bad laws in his day. In Matt. 10: 16-23, Jesus is sending forth his disciples to break the law and even tells his disciples how they will be treated as a result. In Matt. 12 Jesus breaks the Mosaic Law not once but several times. It would be interesting to see how you base your conclusion on scripture. We are not saved to be socially correct; and, in fact, Jesus said in Matt. 10:34, "Think not that I am come to send peace but a sword." I read in the same chapter, verse 38,

that Jesus expects us to be ready to stand for right even unto death if necessary. Every Christian act must be bathed in prayer and motivated by love; however, we cannot hide behind either one. Jesus works through us to a lost world. Jesus prayed, but he also reached out to people. He loved people enough to tell them they were wrong, and, unless they repented, they were going to Hell.

I believe strongly that if Jesus Christ were still on earth, he would be at the abortion clinics rescuing the little ones he thought so highly of that he used them to establish the criteria of the Kingdom.

I'm aware of Rom. 13 and Acts 4:19-20. However, the rescuers function under the "necessity clause" of the trespass law.

Bob Sheppard
Terry

I won't argue the point, but

somehow I believe that if Jesus were on earth today he either would break down the doors of the abortion clinics and drive out the abortioners or he would work to get the law changed. Passive trespassing seems to be a half-way measure. If the law is to be broken, why not go ahead and do an effective job? — Editor

Response misplaced?

Editor:

I have read in several papers accounts of remarks by Dr. Curtis Caine Sr. of the Christian Life Commission regarding Martin Luther King and the response of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

Of course, the FBI files on Dr. King were sealed for some 50 years after his death, but enough leaked through to establish what many already knew: that there were some serious questions concerning his character and conduct. Though I agree that some of the objectives were praiseworthy, some were pursued in all the wrong ways.

Maybe Dr. Caine's remarks were a

bit ill-prompted and misplaced. Equally so was the response of the convention. Martin Luther King was no saint, even as numbers of others are not whom we are so prone to try to elevate to that plane.

R. Clifton Williams
Bogue Chitto

Your point is well taken, but I believe that it was not the intent of the Mississippi Baptist Convention to extol Martin Luther King. — Editor

Encouragement

Editor:

Maybe I owe you an apology. I enjoy the Baptist Record and appreciate your editorials — but I don't ever tell you. I am telling you and trust my "thank you" will be of some encouragement.

The Lord bless you —
Bill Webb, pastor
Midway, Meridian

It is of untold encouragement. Thank you. — Editor

Two left out

Editor:

Regarding the article by Maggie Whittington on "When was the last time you said Thank You."

This is par for the course. When something like this is quoted, someone is going to be left out, and some of the most important. This time it was the financial secretary and the treasurer.

Thanks for these two.

James T. Gaylord
Hernando

Thanks for fairness

Editor:

Thank you for your continuing effort to report in fairness events that are of interest to Mississippi Baptists. You consistently conduct your ministry with the highest integrity. You are an editor with a desire to be true and thorough while dealing with matters that are sensitive.

So, thanks for a job well done.

—Robert E. Self
Brookhaven

Faces and places

by Anne Washburn McWilliams

'By yon bonnie braes'

When I dropped in to visit my neighbor, Pat Green, she served hot tea and three kinds of biscuits (Scots call them that; we call them cookies.) Since she says she can't sing (and I identify with that) I wanted to hear about her experiences as the only non-musical member of a music mission to Scotland in October (story was in last week's BR). Nine from my church, Morrison Heights, made up the partnership evangelism team. They gave concerts, and our pastor, Ken Alford, preached.

They found the countryside still green, and flowers still blooming in the little backyard gardens behind the ancient stone houses, and on the town squares. The many drystone dykes in the fields (stone walls), they learned, had been built to keep the wind from blowing the soil away.

Every afternoon, the Clinton women met with a group of Scottish women for tea and testimony time. "I told my tea cup story," Pat said. (The teacup would still be a lump of clay and not a thing of beauty had it not gone through the molding and firing processes.) She showed me the bouquet of heather she brought home, and held up a linen towel imprinted with a map of Scotland. "See, there's Wigtown" — she pointed to the southwest of the country — "and Newton Stewart and Whithorn." (Scotland is the size of South Carolina, but has twice as many people.)

The Mississippians were welcomed with a barn fellowship at Barvenochan Farm at Whauphill. Bob and Marsha Ford, Southern Baptist missionaries with whom they had planned their itinerary, were there. The Scottish men wore their kilts, which they said they wear only for guests of honor. One played the bagpipes. Others demonstrated Scottish games and folk dances. Then team members met the families in whose homes they would be staying.

Though she did not sing, Pat found opportunities to witness. On that first night, she went home with a couple who lived at the town of Newton Stewart, a law enforcement officer and his wife.

"Are you a member of the Baptist church here?" she asked the police chief. Since he'd been at the barn fellowship, she assumed that he was. When he answered, "No," she asked, "Then where?"

"I'm not a church member."
"You DO know Jesus Christ?"
With his "no," she began explaining what she believed, and how much Christ means to her life.

"Ford sent you here!" he accused. But she denied that, for actually she had been scheduled for another house, until a change at the last moment. She told him how God had worked it out so that she, Sunday School teacher, part time wallpaper hanger, and wife of John Green, could come to Scotland.

When the man arose and left to take his dog for a walk, his wife expressed joy that this was the first time she had ever known her husband to listen while someone talked with him about their religious beliefs.

On his return, Pat said, "I appreciate your willingness to have me as a guest, even though you are not a believer."

"I thought you were a singer."
"The others are, but I can't sing a note."



"One played the bagpipes."

"Well, I did not expect you to be so evangelistic!"

In a day or so a New Testament arrived in the mail at the police department; the chief's wife reported to Pat, "The Bible you sent came today."

"But I didn't send one!" It turned out that it came from a man who sends Bibles to many places. Yet it was remarkable that it came the week the team was there.

"God sent it to you!" Pat told him.

Later, when team member Tim Alford gave his testimony at a service, he asked, "How can anyone live here in the beauty of this land and not believe in God?" Proud of his land, the policeman afterward said, "If anything could make me believe there is a God, it would be the beauty of the earth." The night she left Newton Stewart, Pat told him, "I know you are going to be converted one day. Now you are my friend. But one day you are going to be my brother!"

The second home she stayed in was the "wee house" of Sandy and Margaret Grieve at Wigtown, with one bedroom, sitting room, and kitchen. The Grieves, in their fifties, married five years, both Baptists, happy with their wee house, loaned her the bedroom and slept in the attic. Owner of a crafts shop, he was a former butcher.

The view of a double rainbow somewhat made up for a rainy, cold windy two weeks. Pat wore her all-weather coat and walking shoes everywhere, over layered clothing, and stayed basically dry. But she had been sick before she left home, with a respiratory infection. In winter, she usually avoids being in the rain if she can, for she easily takes a cold. But rain doesn't stop the Scots from going anywhere; they are used to it.

During a two-day stop in London enroute home, the team stopped in hot stores and rode in hot subways and emerged into the cool streets. One day, when a subway escalator stuck, they had to walk up 175 steps. Not surprisingly then, the morning they were to leave for the airport, Pat awoke with laryngitis. On the plane, she coughed all the way across the Atlantic. Back home, she could hardly wait to talk to family and friends, but she could not say a word. When she told the doctor her side was also sore, he ordered an X-ray and then told her, "You have pneumonia!"

In spite of the pneumonia, would she go again? "Yes!" she answered without reservations. I want to go back right now. The darkness and the needs are great. I would like to become a missionary associate and go back to stay."

"Christmas in the Cottonpatch" — next week

CHRISTMAS IN THE COTTONPATCH, a north Mississippi tradition since 1960, will be presented again this year, Dec. 18-Dec. 27, beginning each night at 8. The place: the cottonfield across from Abel's Store on Highway 5, about midway between the towns of Hickory Flat and Ashland.

Seventeen larger than life scenes dominate the seven-acre field, and thousands of small lights representing stars reach a quarter of a mile in depth and climax near a star which measures 24 feet from point to point. The program consists of narration and song, and at the proper time each scene in the field is lighted. Finally all scenes are lighted, and the life of Christ is depicted. The script and music are changed each year, but the story of the life of Christ is always biblically correct. Amplifiers carry the message so all may hear.

Since this is an outdoor program, those attending are urged to dress warmly. They may sit in car or van or bus and hear and see, or sit on the hillside benches provided. There is no charge.

Reception will honor Brogan

The trustees, administration, faculty, and staff of Mississippi Baptist Seminary are hosting a reception honoring Richard Brogan, who ends his tenure as president December, 1988.

The reception will take place at the seminary at 3160 Lynch Street in Jackson, Dec. 17, 2-4 p.m.

In January, Brogan returns to the staff of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, concentrating on black church relations.

"I, Maxie, take you, Gale . . ."

By Shirley Nash

sign language.

Mary and Randy Laird, a young couple who started the deaf ministry in our church have had a big influence on deaf people becoming involved in God's work.

Mary told me about a young man who worked at a local cemetery. His boss, member of our church, allowed me to visit with Maxie on the job. Maxie had been deaf since birth.

I walked up to Maxie, bashful as he was, and started signing to him. He started walking backward and I kept walking forward . . . I told him we had a ministry at Easthaven that would help him to understand the word of God. I shared with him that we had many interpreters to help the deaf to know that Jesus loved them.

I prayed hard for Maxie to be there the next Sunday, and he walked in for Sunday School. God not only answered my prayer, but Maxie accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior about six weeks later.

Our pastor, Brother Bendon Ginn, shared with our church, that when he baptized Maxie, as he was bringing him up out of the water, a bright light circled his face, an experience he said he had never witnessed before.

Then Gale entered the picture. All the church had watched their friendship mature. They seemed to be the perfect couple.

Imagine the love and work that went into the preparation of a wedding within one week! But never did I hear

anyone complain.

During the ceremony, it was all I could do, as I stood by my pastor, as interpreter, to hold back my tears.

As I heard the wedding march begin, I whispered to him, "You do know that I might cry, don't you?" Having read that interpreters were supposed to refrain from becoming emotionally involved when interpreting, needless to say, I almost drowned.

I watched the beautiful bride round the corner on her brother's arm. I glanced at Maxie, standing next to my husband, Billy, the best man. The smile on his face was added to the long list of blessings I receive from my Lord, daily.

As I was leaving, I turned to give Maxie one last good bye wave, but he was already waving to me. Maxie knew that I loved him, that I cared and that Jesus loved him also. Maxie knew this because God had given me the ability to tell him so, in his own language.

Maxie and Gale aren't able to hear any little bells go off when they fell in love, nor could they hear the wedding march being played at their own wedding, but I'm sure the Lord's planning to change that someday, and they'll hear music beyond description.

As I watched Maxie and Gale repeating their wedding vows with their hands, promising to love each other always until death separated them, I thought how beautiful their language was.

Devotional

Churches re-enact the Christmas story

By Waurine Ferguson Walley

Part II

By Waurine Ferguson Walley

Christian wait in the wings of the church balconies in anticipation of the colorful pageantry of their favorite celebration of the year. Their hearts are ready to "experience Christmas."



Walley

They are surprised that the stage is dark, empty, and silent. The narrator allows time to reflect on the meaningfulness of such a setting before he explains that life, too, is meaningless without the hope of the Savior, Jesus Christ.

From the darkness, strained voices of two people, a man and a woman are heard in the distance. Though their words cannot be distinguished, the tone of voice indicates that the conversation is a serious one. The on-lookers lean forward hoping to see something from the darkness . . . hoping to hear a word of encouragement. They are heartened as a few flickering lights appear, framing the familiar outline of a city that they recognize as the city of Bethlehem and the city to which Joseph must go to be registered for a census decreed by Caesar Augustus (Luke 2:1-5).

One by one the lights from the inns are extinguished and only the outline of a few late-comers are seen as they try to find a place to spend the night. Among those are Mary and Joseph. Mary's shadowy silhouette discloses that her delivery time is near. "No room here" is the repeated response from the innkeepers in Bethlehem as Joseph asks from door to door for a room (Luke 2:7).

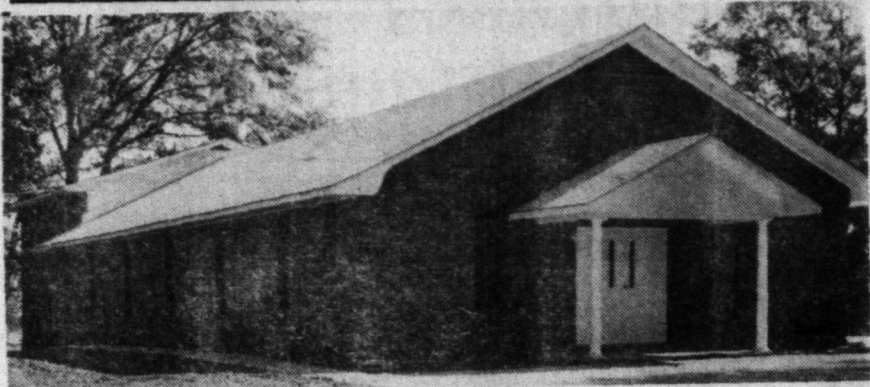
The encouragement felt only moments ago turns to gloom for the quiet observers as they identify with the unfortunate situation of the couple. Somehow they hope that this year's innkeeper might say, "Sure, we have a beautiful room with a scenic view of a terraced mountainside and we'll roll in the most luxurious crib that we have when the baby is born!" They want to hear those kind words because they understand the pleasure of comfort and acceptance more than they understand discomfort and rejection.

History remains unchanged, though, and the curtain closes on a weary Joseph, failing in his attempt to find an acceptable place to spend the night, but he is not downcast because his faith in God is strong enough to overcome his dejection of the moment with the confidence that God would prepare a place for them.

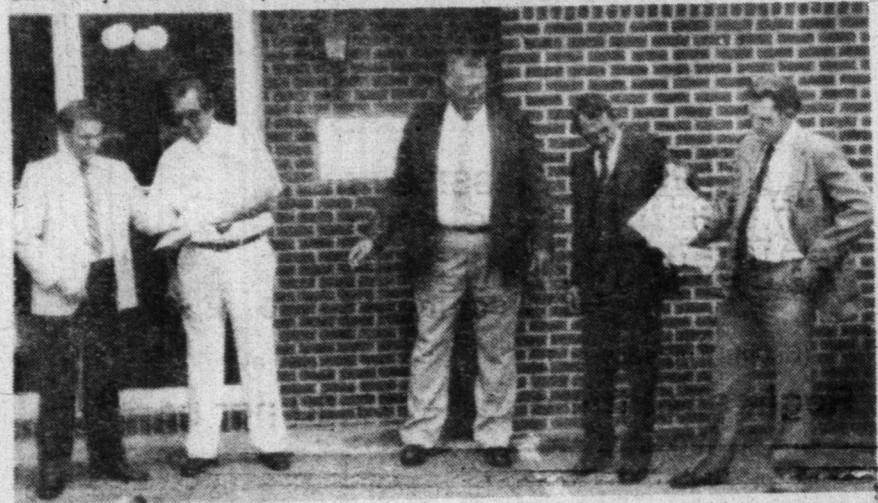
All of God's people can sympathize with Joseph's predicament because they have experienced ill circumstances in their own lives. They know pain but they don't understand the necessity of it. The narrator reminds them, then, that suffering and trouble can draw them closer to God and can teach them to lean on His understanding rather than their own; and when they do, they become more mature Christians, desiring to bend their wills to the will of the Heavenly Father, realizing that he has a purpose for every life as he did for Mary and Joseph.

Waurine (Renee) Walley is a member of Woodland Hills Church, Jackson, and an employee of the BAPTIST RECORD.

Just for the Record



Oak Grove Church, located 18 miles southwest of Lexington, dedicated its new sanctuary and fellowship hall on Nov. 20. Gage Hynum is pastor.



Grace Memorial Church, Tupelo, burned church notes on homecoming, Oct. 9. Regular services were held, dinner on the grounds, and an afternoon of singing. After the singing the people gathered outside the front of the church and the notes were burned. Grace Church was organized by Joe Holcomb, pastor, on Oct. 10, 1976 with 17 members and held services in the parsonage until completion of the church five months later. Pictured, left to right, are Gary Haynes, deacon; Harvey Witcher, trustee; Holcomb; Shelby Moore, trustee; and Larry Gibson, trustee.



First Church of Potts Camp, held groundbreaking services on Sept. 25 for a new combination building that will include a large fellowship hall, ten Sunday school rooms, and a recreation area. The new building is scheduled to be completed in early January.

Pictured, left to right, are building committee members Robert Luther, Doyle Baum, Carol Ray, Edward Overall; committee chairman Marshall Clifton; G. Wiley Gann, pastor, and chairman of deacons Johnny Westmoreland.



Members of Bethany Church, Potts Camp, honored for Sunday School perfect attendance are pictured, Anthony Clayton, Betty Clayton, Angie Clayton, Stephanie Bennett, and Trey Hill, 3 years; Christy West, Connie Bennett, Dennis Clayton, Melissa Bennett, Rebecca Worsham, 2 years; Keith McLeroy and Christina Seals, 1 year. Bethany Church set a record Oct. 23 when 75 attended Sunday School with enrollment of 68. Church Training attendance was 50 with 48 enrolled. Carl Teel is pastor.

East Moss Point Church, Moss Point, honored Mrs. Margrett Blackwell at a churchwide Thanksgiving fellowship after the evening service on Nov. 20. She has been a member for 35 years and has served 28 years as WMU president/director.

Mrs. Blackwell was presented a cross stitch sampler of the permanent WMU Watchword. A gold necklace with 28 gold beads; one for each year of service, was also presented to her by Mrs. Bee Stauter, incoming director. Harold Anderson is pastor.

H.O.P.E. (Helping Others, Providing Empathy), a support group for people grieving the death of a loved one, will meet Dec. 15, at 6 p.m. at Mississippi Baptist Medical Center. Headed by MBMC's mental health clinical nurse specialist and director of Social Services, the group meets the third Thursday of each month at MBMC. For more information call 968-3090.

The adult choir of Calvary Church, Petal, under the direction of W. C. Rainey Jr., will present the musical "Come to the Manger" on Dec. 18 at 7 p.m. Phil T. Harris is pastor.

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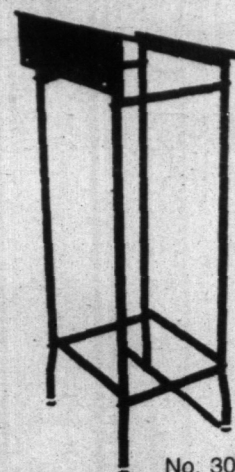


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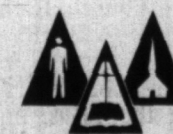
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Miss Starnes retires in Thailand

A retirement luncheon was held recently at Calvary Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in Bangkok, Thailand, to honor Fanny Louise Starnes. She retired in late November 1988, from 33 years of service in various ministries in Thailand.

While on the foreign mission field that was once called "Siam," Miss Starnes worked in publication, evangelism, secretarial work in the Thailand Baptist Mission office, and since 1967, has served as mission treasurer.

Miss Starnes was born in Hattiesburg, Miss. in 1923. She is a graduate of New Orleans Seminary. She was appointed to Thailand in 1955.



Fanny Louise Starnes at the retirement luncheon given in her honor at Calvary Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in Bangkok, Thailand, recognizing her 33 years of ministry in Thailand. Seated at the table directly behind the honoree are missionaries David Stevenson (in suit and tie), who became the new treasurer of the Mission upon Miss Starnes' retirement, and his wife Judy talking with Bob Stewart who MCed the occasion. (Photo by Maxine Stewart)

Registration for family workshop extended

Persons may register for Family Leadership Workshops as late as Jan. 9 by sending \$25 fee for single or \$40 per couple to Family Ministry, Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205. This fee covers meals (except breakfast, Saturday) and materials Jan. 13-14. The sessions at the Baptist Building in Jackson begin at 3 p.m. on Friday and conclude by 3 p.m. on Saturday.

Simultaneous leadership training sessions are being offered on "Family Enrichment in Your Church," "Parenting by Grace" and "Covenant Marriage." Leaders previously announced are G. Ted Taylor, Starkville, Billy G. Johnson, Hattiesburg and Carl Dickinson, Laurel.

Church leaders interested in any of these phases of Family Ministry will be given training to lead in these areas.

Horseshoe holds Mrs. Joe Wade Day

Horseshoe Church near Tchula honored one of its oldest members with a special day on Nov. 13. Mrs. Wade's birthday was the previous day, Nov. 12. She was 83.

Mrs. Wade joined Horseshoe Church Aug. 23, 1942, and has been a member since that time. She was church treasurer at one time, and has taught Sunday School and Vacation Bible School throughout these years. "There was never a question about who would be the Junior teacher, for Mrs. Wade always filled that position," one member said. "We are thankful that she could be a part of our lives these many years. We love her."

Lou McBride Ingram wrote "A Tribute to Mrs. Wade" which was read on the special day. It speaks of her dedication and loyalty to the church: "She has walked in the sun, the wind, and the rain, never even mentioning if the walk caused her pain, to teach our young children about Jesus, God's son, and even now, still, her work is not done." It also mentions that "once to church on a three-wheeler she came!" and that she certainly has earned a "place in the sun."



Mrs. Wade



Vivian Steen Thompson signs a trust agreement to hand to Aubrey Boone, director, Mississippi Baptist Foundation.

Vivian Steen Thompson establishes trust funds in memory of her parents

Mrs. Vivian Steen Thompson has established a trust fund with the Mississippi Baptist Foundation in memory of her father, Morris Steen, who died in November, 1988. The income from the fund is to go to the Church-Minister Relations Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, for ministerial aid.

Previously Mrs. Thompson had established a trust fund with the Foundation in memory of her mother, Emma D. Steen, who died in July of this year. Income from that fund goes to First Baptist Church, Richland, to be added by the church to its Benevolence Fund.

Emma and Morris Steen were members of First Church, Richland, for almost 50 years. A World War I veteran, he was a deacon, Sunday School director, and Church Training director. During the 1950s, he was Rankin County superintendent of education; he also had taught school.

Mrs. Thompson said that her

BR sets self straight about USM BSU story

The Baptist Record would like to set itself straight. In an article in the Nov. 24 issue, the Record got the story right, but the headline wrong. The article correctly told of the organization of an alumni group for the Baptist Student

Union at the University of Southern Mississippi. But, somehow, the headline, utilizing initials, reversed the letters, giving organizational credit to another university in the state. We're sorry. Actually, we're told, we've done this

very thing before. Ordinarily, the Baptist Record has its typographical errors hidden so that only a careful search can detect them. In the future, we promise to try to make the errors more difficult to find. — TAN

China Bibles sell out fast

NANJING, China — Bibles have gone on sale in public bookstores in China for the first time in the communist era. The New China bookstore chain sold out its first stock of 10,000 Bibles in days with only word-of-mouth publicity, according to National and International Religion Report. The Bibles, which sell for about \$3.60, were printed by Amity Press, a publishing operation run by Chinese Christians in cooperation with others.

Christian leaders helped negotiate the bookstore sales, which they believe will offer the best channel to distribute Bibles to people outside churches.

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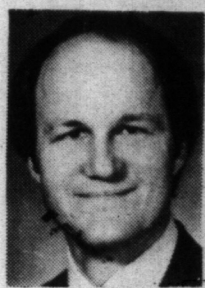
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Can we really pray all the time?

By Steve Odom

Acts 20:36; Ephesians 3:14-21; 6:18-20
Pray all the time? You've got to be kidding! Constant prayer is the vocation of monks and nuns, not "regular" people. Well, I guess it all



Odom

depends on how we look at prayer. For some, prayer is a specific act at a specific time for a specific concern. And certainly that qualifies as a legitimate form of prayer. But Paul the Apostle encouraged his readers in at least two places in the New Testament to pray all the time. In Ephesians 6:18, Paul said to "Pray at all times in the Spirit." In I Thessalonians 5:17, he told the Thessalonian Christians to "pray constantly."

Is Paul saying here in the form of hyperbole, or intended exaggeration, that we should make prayer a priority in our schedule of activities? Or, is he saying that there is a way to pray all the time? For Paul, prayer was not something that is at our disposal for when we need it. For Paul, prayer was an attitude that characterized every thought and action in our lives.

LIFE AND WORK

There is a pastor in France by the name of Michael Quoist who has written a book entitled *Prayers*. Quoist has said that the goal of our prayer life is that all of life become a prayer. Now, Quoist was not saying that we drive down the street in our cars with our eyes closed in prayer, nor that we shop at the grocery store with our eyes closed in prayer. Both could be dangerous and counterproductive. That view of prayer is one limited to the outward activity of prayer.

There is, however, more to prayer than outward postures. There is also an inward posture of prayer, a posture which does not necessarily require the closing of our eyes. As a matter of fact, such an inward posture of prayer is best when our eyes are wide open.

Perhaps this inward posture of prayer is what Paul had in mind when he said to pray all the time. It reflects an attitude of prayer in which we are constantly aware of God's presence in our world and our lives, an awareness which allows us to converse with God anytime and anywhere. Such an attitude means that we will

likely have to view our world in a different way. We will have to see it as a place where God waits for us to recognize and acknowledge his presence. When that happens, we will have begun to move toward the goal of all of life becoming a prayer.

This inward posture of prayer will enliven the traditional forms of prayer for us and allow us to express ourselves to God openly and freely in the course of everyday life. Whether praise, thanksgiving, confession, intercession and petition, or surrender, every dimension of prayer can become a vital force in forming our daily activities.

Paul had a habit of letting the churches to whom he wrote know that he was praying for them. There was probably little doubt in the minds of the Ephesian elders who came to Miletus to see Paul that his prayer with them would be a constant prayer for them (Acts 20:36). We only need turn to Paul's letter to the Ephesians to see that this was indeed the case. In Ephesians 3:14, Paul used the phrase "bow my knees" to indicate his prayerful concern for the Ephesian Christians. The verb "bow" is in the present tense in Greek which carries the force of continuation.

Paul prayed that the Ephesians might (1) be

strengthened inwardly (2) be grounded in love (3) be aware of the expansive love of Christ (4) be filled with the fullness of God in Christ. Could this be the ultimate prayer of intercession for anyone? What more could anyone need in any circumstance than inward strength, a sense of being firmly grounded, an awareness of God's sustaining love and the knowledge of being filled with the fullness of God?

Paul wanted the Ephesian Christians to pray constantly for all the saints and for him (Ephesians 6:18-20). What was it he wanted them to pray on behalf of the saints and on his behalf? No doubt it was the very prayer he had earlier prayed for them, a prayer of intercession that would be welcomed by anyone in any circumstance.

This kind of prayer does not set anyone up for false expectations and disappointment. This kind of intercessory prayer is the height of trust in God's providential care for his children. It is a prayer that invites trust on our parts and the one for whom we pray. It is the kind of prayer that recognizes God's caring presence in all of life. Can we really pray all the time? Yes, we can. Yes, we must.

Odom is pastor, University Church, Hattiesburg.

God's promise fulfilled; rejoicing in God's greatness

By Robert Earl Shirley

Luke 2:1-20

The birth of Jesus Christ is not simply a matter of religious faith but a pivotal moment in world history as well. Although a considerable amount of debate and uncertainty has revolved around the exact date, it is established as



Shirley

having been, as the Bible records, during the reign of Caesar Augustus. The words of Luke in the beginning of this chapter were not given to pinpoint the date but to explain why Jesus came to be born in Judea rather than in Galilee.

On the occasion of one of the censuses that were taken at intervals for the purpose of taxation, both Joseph and Mary, now his wife, being of the family of David, made the long tiresome trip to the town of Bethlehem in compliance. Each person was probably required to go to "his own city" for it was there

UNIFORM

where the family registry of property holdings and the like were kept.

The huge crowds that were there for the census would have caused lodging to be at a premium. That, and possibly Mary's need for privacy in her condition, had resulted in their being quartered in a stable. The fact that it was there in the night that Jesus was born has a significance that should not be overlooked. Throughout the ages, mankind has put too much stress on material things, and one would have expected this birth to have taken place in a mansion. Instead, his lowly birth teaches us that greatness is not something one has but, rather, what one is. Born in a stable, heralded as a king on a borrowed donkey, crucified in poverty on a cross as a criminal, Jesus was, and is still, the Son of God, the Savior of the world.

Verification of this truth is seen in the announcement of his birth by an angel to shepherds keeping watch over their flock in the

fields. This was followed by a choir of heavenly host praising God. These men were simple people who worked each day for a living. They were unschooled in the theology of the time, but they shared with all people of all generations the need for a Savior. One can understand their fears. They had been shared by both Zacharias and Mary at an earlier date. Merely to contemplate the very existence of God is an awesome thing. To realize that one is actually in his presence and that he is giving direction to one's life is an overwhelming realization.

Christ came into the world for all people — the rich, the poor, the mighty, the lowly. Whoever we are, we can rejoice in the fact that we are loved. God loves us. Each of us. The still small voice of God speaks to every individual the message that the angel of God spoke to lonely men at work in the fields.

There are strong differences of opinion concerning whether one of these verses should be translated "good will among men" or "to men of good will." One thing is obvious, though. Real peace for any person in any age is to be found

only in Christ, but that peace is available to all who will receive it. The angels gave a sign that would identify Jesus as the child whose birth they were announcing. The shepherds would find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger. It was a strange sign when we consider the splendor of the announcement itself. The two taken together serve to remind us that this was truly the divine Christ entering the world in human form to accomplish atonement for the sins of men everywhere.

As would be expected, the shepherds hastened to see this thing that had come to pass and recounted over and over in Bethlehem all that they had seen and heard in the fields. Any personal experience with Christ is a moving one, and for the Christian to witness to his faith to others is a normal reaction. As we present day Christians remember what Christ has done in our lives, his love will compel us to witness personally to those around us and, through our mission program, to the whole world.

Shirley is pastor emeritus, Parkway, Tupelo.

The tabernacle is completed; God's presence fills it

By Frank H. Thomas Jr.

Exodus 35:1-40; 38

The book of Exodus comes to a conclusion with the fulfillment of all the instructions about the tabernacle, altars, sacrifices, and



Thomas

priesthood. Because we do not live in a day and time when these elaborate preparations for worship are normally taken, we may fail to grasp the significance of the seriousness with which the people carried out these instructions.

Because of the faithfulness of the people to carry out these instructions, God

was pleased with them and sent his presence to dwell in the tabernacle as he dwelt with the people. The scriptures deal with the actual building of the tabernacle and the laborers and the craftsmen who were enlisted for the task. There was a call for offerings to be made of materials which could be used in the building and in the preparation.

The scripture goes into great detail to describe the making of the curtains which separate the different rooms of the tabernacle, joining the curtains for the tabernacle, making the tent for covering the tabernacle, constructing the frames for the tabernacle, the supporting bars, the veil and the screen, and equipment for the tabernacle. All of these were done precisely according to the instructions which had been given by the Lord through Moses. The

BIBLE BOOK

people were faithful in carrying out these instructions.

The equipment for the tabernacle was described as the ark, the table for the presence bread, the lamp stand, the altar of incense, the anointing oil and the incense, the bronze altar of burnt offering, the laver of bronze, and the tabernacle court. All of these were prepared according to the instructions of the Lord through Moses. We could only begin to compare these instructions to those instructions carried out in the building of an elaborate sanctuary with its appointments and equipment placed properly for the worship of God. Sometimes we do not give that much attention to worship and to the accomplishments of worship. We correctly focus upon the evangelistic task in proclaiming the word of God. But perhaps we also need to give attention to God's holiness and to our worship of him lest we fall into a slipshod worship which fails to worship God first and foremost.

A summary of the offerings and work on the tabernacle is given in chapter 38. The work of the tabernacle included a three-fold division of leadership: Moses who gave the commandment of the Lord and who communicated the instructions; Ithamar, son of Aaron, under whom the Levites served; and Bezalel and his associate, Oholiab, who actually did work in building the tabernacle.

The theology which underlay the building of the tabernacle was just as important as the building itself. The tabernacle or tent of meeting was probably very primitive at first and gained in sophistication as time went on. Just so the priests and the priestly vestments and ornaments gained in sophistication and in complication as time went on. Chapter 39 gives detailed instruction about the priestly dress: These included the ephod, the breast piece of judgment, the robe of the ephod, garments for the sons of Aaron, and the gold talisman. All of these assumed great importance over time for the priest as a leader of worship.

The erection of the tabernacle or tent of meeting was done to provide a place where the people could meet God at that point of their sojourn. In no way was the tabernacle considered to be a permanent building. Rather it was a temporary building which could be taken down and carried with a tribe or group or people to its next location. It would then be re-assembled, and the people would meet God at that place.

In later times after the settlement of Israel in the Promised Land, the people erected a permanent temple in which they worshipped God. Their theology of God changed from that of a tabernacled presence to that of a static deity whose presence was located in the temple in Jerusalem. The beauty of the symbol of the tabernacle was that it emphasized a dynamic God who went with his people from place to place. So we today make a choice between our concept of God — either as a tabernacled presence who goes with us wherever we are or

a permanent presence in a permanent building or location. The God of the Bible is and always has been a tabernacled presence with his people. Our relationship with the Lord is most significant when we view him and serve him as a tabernacled presence who is with us at all times.

The conclusion of the book refers to the cloud which filled the tabernacle. This cloud was the glory of God, whose presence in the tabernacle forbade any movement on the part of the tribe. Only when the cloud was lifted out of the tabernacle and above it were the people able to move again on the next leg of their journey. The scripture tells us that this presence of God was viewed in the cloud by day and the fire by night. The cloud may have been a reference to the incense which was burned in the tabernacle during the day and the fire which burned in the tabernacle by night. Both of these were symbols of the Lord's presence and of his guidance.

Even today we would do well to remember that it is the presence of God which we seek in our worship. We do not limit God's presence to one sanctified or holy place, but we look to him as a tabernacled presence, seeking his presence with us wherever we happen to be. Even though we may be a settled, permanent people today, we as God's people are always on the move doing something, growing, or going somewhere. Whatever our journey or whatever our pilgrimage in life, let us take the tabernacled presence of God with us and meet him in worship wherever we happen to be.

Thomas is pastor, Alta Woods, Jackson.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



Baptist Children's Village

Paul N. Nunnery, Executive Director

P. O. Box 11308, Jackson, MS 39213, (601) 922-2242

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Licensed by the State of Mississippi

Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of the Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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Nov. 18, 1988

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THANKS FOR REMEMBERING

THE CHILDREN AT THE VILLAGE

CHRISTMAS — 1988

When multiple appeals for financial help tug at your heartstrings and checkbooks,

"MISSISSIPPI'S LARGEST FAMILY"

The Baptist Children's Village

IS GLAD TO BE A RECIPIENT OF EXPRESSED LOVE VIA YOUR GIFT.

If your good intentions have yet to be translated into action,
YOU STILL HAVE TIME TO SEND A CASH GIFT

* To provide appropriate CHRISTMAS GIFTS for
the children

* To help with the ANNUAL food and milk needs.

If receipts exceed Christmas and food requirements, any excess will be allocated to general needs.

SEND YOUR GENEROUS CHECK TODAY TO:

The Baptist Children's Village
Paul Nunnery, Executive Director
P. O. Box 11308
Jackson, MS 39283-1308

Telephone: (601) 922-2242

Licensed by State of Mississippi Accredited by National Association of Homes for Children

Note — 1989 Change of Address

The attention of every Village friend is invited to the fact that our mailing address will change, effective January 1, 1989. Any mail dispatched to this agency, or its residents, which will be delivered after December 31, 1988, should be addressed as follows:

The Baptist Children's Village
P. O. Box 27

Clinton, Mississippi 39060-0027

The change of address is effected in order to use a postal station which is about 6 miles nearer to our central offices, thus conserving time and vehicle costs.

Remember: We will continue to use our current Jackson mailing address throughout the remainder of calendar year 1988.

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Baptists sense despair among Palestinians

By Art Toalston

JERUSALEM (BP) — A new Palestinian state has been declared, but nothing has yet eased the despair among Palestinians on the West Bank, said two Southern Baptists who minister in Arab communities within Israel and the occupied territories.

"People are hopeless, depressed, hurting. They're looking for some sign of hope, for friends, for love, and they just don't know where to look," said Ray Hicks, a Southern Baptist representative in Israel. Hicks lives in a former Jordanian village that was annexed to Jerusalem after the Six-Day War of 1967.

Jarrell Peach, another Southern Baptist representative in Israel, said he senses a wait-and-see attitude among Palestinians in East Jerusalem, where he lives and works.

Peach said the Israeli Army intensified security measures in and

around Arab neighborhoods after the new Palestinian state was declared Nov. 15 during a meeting of the Palestine Liberation Organization's 450-member Palestine National Council in Algiers, Algeria. Some 1.5 million Palestinians live in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Both Baptist workers recounted hardships their Palestinian friends and acquaintances have weathered during the "intifada," the Palestinian uprising against Israeli rule. More than 310 Palestinians and 11 Israelis have been killed in the conflict, which has lasted more than a year.

"My barber's son was shot," Hicks said. "The gas station man's son was shot."

Hicks, who often visits a Palestinian refugee camp near Bethlehem, added that nearly "every family in the camp has had a family member either wounded, killed, or arrested,

and that's in a camp of 6,000 to 7,000 people."

People are frightened, Peach said. Palestinians continually face the possibility of detention, imprisonment, beatings, or damage to property as the Israeli Army strives to control the intifada.

Hicks urged Christians in the United States to exercise care in their opinions about the Arab-Jewish strife.

"It's so easy for us as Westerners to get only one side of a situation and then draw conclusions, whether it's the Arab perspective or the Jewish perspective," he said. Christians, he emphasized, are called to be peacemakers and reconcilers, "and we cannot do that with a one-sided perspective."

He asked Christians to "at least try to find out how the other side feels, how they're hurting. Then we can be reconcilers and perhaps be a part of the process of bringing the two

together."

Opportunities for ministry abound, but at times Peach cannot reach people in need because of military restrictions isolating their neighborhoods.

Hicks told of joining a Muslim family at the hospital bedside of their son, who had been hit by a fragmenting-style bullet that perforated his intestines and lower abdomen in 18 places.

The 16-year-old was not expected to live beyond 24 hours, but he survived three operations. Hicks gave the youth a New Testament for his birthday a few months later. In a subsequent visit, the father said he had been reading it to his son each evening and they already had covered more than half its pages.

The day Hicks first visited that family in the hospital, he stood with another family at the bedside of their 14-year-old son, who was dying of a

gunshot wound to the head. He also talked with an Arab friend who had just learned he faced deportation by Israeli authorities.

Hicks returned home in tears. "It was just too much. It broke my heart," he said. He believes he would fall into ongoing despair "if I didn't have my faith, my hope in the Lord Jesus, and a loving family that prays for these situations and encourages me. I don't know how these people make it."

Beyond the battles between stone-throwing young Palestinians and Israeli troops, Peach pointed to the deeper "spiritual warfare" in the land involving Jews, Muslims, and Christians.

They also fear the rise in religious fervency among the Muslim majority. Many Christians are leaving the country at "any opportunity they can get." The atmosphere, he said, "affects everything."

Art Toalston writes for FMB.

Staff changes

Freedom Church, Laurel, has called a pastor, Tracy Hipps. Hipps, a native of Macon, Ga., served four years in the Air Force. He attended East Mississippi Junior College and plans to continue to further his education. He has served as Clay County association director, and as pastor of Enon Church, Clay County.



Hipps

Kenneth Briggs has joined the staff of Harmony Church, New Albany, as minister of youth. He is a graduate of East Union High School, Northeast Jr. College and is a senior at Blue Mountain majoring in biblical studies. Briggs was licensed to the ministry by his home church, Ellistown, in February of this year. He assumed his responsibility Dec. 4. Robert L. Daniel is pastor.



Briggs

Centurymen sing in China

By Lounette Templeton

BEIJING, China (BP) — The Centurymen, Southern Baptists' best-known male choir, performed Nov. 14 on national television in China.

The prime-time, hour-long program called "Musical Bridges," produced by Chinese Central Television, was one of the highlights of the group's 19-day concert tour. The Chinese network invited the choir to China.

Accompanied by the Chinese Broadcasting Traditional Orchestra

and directed by Southern Baptist composer-conductor Buryl Red, the Centurymen performed both American and Chinese music for the television production.

The choir also premiered a work composed especially for the program by Peng Xiuwen, director of the Chinese orchestra.

"The orchestra was superb, of the highest standard," said choir member Tom Smith of South Carolina. Kentuckian Doyle Searcy was pleased that songs with Christian themes were allowed. "Five years ago when we came, it would have been impossible for us to sing 'Amazing Grace' in China, let alone on Chinese TV," he said. The Centurymen first performed in China in 1983.

"They could have chosen any number of choral groups, but they chose us, a Christian group," added choir member Dennis McIntire of Mississippi.

The purpose of the tour was twofold: for cultural exchange with China's musical community and to encourage the Chinese Christian community, Jimmy Allen, RTVC president, said. Ninety-eight of the choir's 145 members went to China on the tour.

By arrangement with the Radio and Television Commission, a documentary on the Centurymen's tour of China is scheduled to air on ABC television March 5. Broadcast time is to be announced.

Southern Baptists' Cooperative Services International organization, which serves countries where missionaries do not reside, helped schedule Centurymen concerts in Shanghai, Nanjing, and in several churches.

Said Texan Lowell Rollins, "When we sang 'God Be With You,' and the people joined in, it was so touching, I couldn't sing."

Tom Lynn of Florida said: "The church in its purest form must be in China . . . Obviously, a revival is going on."

The Centurymen did not limit their singing to scheduled engagements. They broke into song at schools, factories, hotels, restaurants, parks, department stores, train stations, and airports.

The choir gave one impromptu concert at a high school under a welcome

banner made by the students. One of the teachers said the school had been run by missionaries before the revolution.

Kermit Tandberg of Louisiana was asked to sing in Shanghai's huge Exhibition Hall. He sang "Jesus Loves Me" in English and in Chinese, adding sign language for good measure.

Public evangelism is restricted in China, but the choir members found other opportunities to talk about the gospel.

Doyal Spence of Virginia befriended a young Chinese man who was on his way home from a U.S. business trip. During the 16-hour flight to Beijing, they discussed a wide range of topics, including religion. A week later, after a concert, the young man came to tell Spence he had decided to become a Christian.

In addition to McIntire from Midway Church, Jackson, Mississippi was represented by Raymond Ball of Woodville Heights Church, Jackson; Lester Mason, Harrisburg, Tupelo; James Hayes, First, Hattiesburg; and Gary Anglin, First, Pascagoula.

Lounette Templeton, Southern Baptist press representative in Hong Kong, accompanied the Centurymen to China.

SCRAPBOOK

Christmas traditions

Each window lighted by a dim candle
With a wreath out on the door;
Tinsel lights all over the tree —
With tiny tinkler bells galore.
All the packages have luscious bows,
And stockings hung perfectly right;
Little feet prancing over the floor,
Soon tucked in for the night,
"Making perfect Christmas traditions."

Faraway sounds of fireworks popping,
And the church bells that ring
While children play in the snow,
And carolers to each household sing.
The hustle and bustle of the shoppers,
And a tired mother's sigh
As the children are jollily playing
Patiently gazing toward the sky.
"Making sounds of Christmas traditions."

Rushing out to each of the stores,
Buying gifts for Christmas day,
Hoping that the holiday spirit
That's within your heart will stay.
Finding time to call and visit
Neighbors and friends you seldom see,
Then passing your love and joy around,
That will spread beyond the sea.
"These are thoughts of Christmas traditions."

We feel Christmas all around us,
At church or home or at a mall;
Yet our mind still wanders back
To the Christ-child born in a stall.
So the warmth that's in our hearts
Will always and forever stay,
So we can help a needy world
Proclaim a "Joyous Christmas Day."
This is joy of Christmas traditions."

—A. J. Grantham
Richland

Noel luminaries

On Christmas Eve
the small lighted candles
placed in sand filled
white paper bags
line sidewalks and driveways.
The little lights glow softly
against the darkness,
reminding us
that Christ, our Savior,
who was born
in a Bethlehem stall
that Holy Night
is the true light
of the world.

—Eunice Barnes
Pascagoula

Whose birthday is this, anyway?

Jolly Ho is waiting at each corner,
Rudolph Red and Frosty Snow are there;
Christmas trees and pealing bells abounding,
Rushing shoppers' greetings fill the air.

We are celebrating Someone's birthday
With gifts at this most sacred season time;
But in stillness I begin to wonder —
Is it Jesus', or Santa Claus', or mine?

—Erma Jewel Crowe
Greenville

Baptist Record

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901 COMMERCE ST SUITE 401
NASHVILLE TN 37203

Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205

December 15, 1988